

ABSTRACT

DISSERTATION: Preservice Teachers' Sense of Self-Efficacy Toward Teaching in an Inclusive Classroom

STUDENT: Moriah Smothers

DEGREE: Doctor of Elementary Education

COLLEGE: Teachers College

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This mixed methods study examined the influence a single introductory special education course had on preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs toward teaching in an inclusive classroom. The study also examined which factors were associated with the influence on preservice teachers' sense of self-efficacy toward teaching in an inclusive classroom. The study included 100 participants in the first phase (quantitative) and 8 participants in the second phase (qualitative). The quantitative phase of the study used descriptive statistics, paired samples t-tests, and multiple regression. The qualitative phase of the study used open and axial coding. The results indicated that an introductory special education course had a significant, positive influence on preservice teachers' self-efficacy beliefs toward teaching in an inclusive classroom. Quantitative and qualitative evidence showed that the only significant predictor variable was level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities. In addition, participants reported they were more efficacious towards teaching in an inclusive classroom, but they needed field experiences to practice what they had learned. Findings also revealed that there were continued feelings of unpreparedness managing behaviors.